

## **James Wilkinson to Andrew Jackson, January 25, 1813, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.**

### **JAMES WILKINSON TO JACKSON.**

Head Quarters, New Orleans, January 25, 1813.

*Sir* , I have received a letter from his Excellency Governor Blount, of Tennessee; under date of the 5th. inst. wherein he informs me you were about to move from Nashville, with one thousand four hundred Infantry and Riflemen, and six hundred and seventy Dragoons and mounted Infantry, destined to this city; and the requisitions, which you have made, through Governor Claiborne, to the Assistant Deputy Quarter Master and the Contractor's Agent here, have been put into my hands. Without knowing what may be your orders, instructions or the extent of your command, I must regret, that you have not done me the honor to communicate with me; because, being placed in the command of this department by the national executive, I could have better forwarded your views than any other person, and you can find no man more zealously disposed to cherish the band of patriots, whom you lead, than myself: But, under the orders which direct my conduct, my personal honor, my public obligations and the national interests forbid that I should yield my command to any person, until regularly relieved by superior authority.

I beg leave to refer you to my letter of the 22nd. Inst., and must repeat my desire, that you should halt in the vicinity of Natchez, until I may receive the communications required in that letter, and furnish you an answer. At present, Sir, the corps of your command could not find quarters, forage or provisions, but for a few days in this city.

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Your letter to the Assistant Deputy Quarter Master at Natchez,<sup>1</sup> notified him of the approach of four hundred Infantry, instead of fourteen hundred, which led to the proposition, contained in my letter respecting the movement of that Corps.

<sup>1</sup> The following letter of Jan. 21, 1813, from Maj. Bartholomew Schaumburgh, deputy quartermaster at New Orleans, to Robert Andrews, assistant deputy quartermaster, at Natchez, will show the reader some of the difficulties that lay in the way of furnishing supplies to Jackson's detachment:

"Sir, The multiplicity of business has prevented me from writing to you sooner. I now acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th. and 13th. inst. together with your accounts up to the 31st. Decr. last. They have only been cursorily examined; and therefore cannot now say any thing of their correctness. I should have directed you to purchase two teams had you not already done so. It will be a saving to the U. S. and I believe it will still be better were you to purchase two more, as you will no doubt have a great deal of hawling during the time the militia stays with you.

"The commanding Genl. has communicated to me, that seven hundred mounted men of the Tennessee Militia have arrived at your place. He does not know whether or not mounted Militia have been put in requisition by the Genl. Government, from that state. If they are authorized corps, they are certainly entitled to forage. Their return for forage must be made out agreeable to the form under cover. You should never issue forage to a less number than a company, and you should prevail on the commanding officer, to have his returns made out for at least four days, and the return for the corps should be consolidated.

"As this mounted corps will give you a good deal of trouble, you are authorised to engage a person as forage master, to whom you may give from \$35 to 40\$ per month, and a ration per day. You will also stand in need of labourers, whom you may also engage on the best terms, if you cannot get them for the Militia. You better, before you engage any, apply to

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the commanding officer for his assistance. If you can obtain them in this manner, it will be a saving to the United states.

“It is necessary you should possess a good deal of suavity towards those people. They should have every thing the law allows them. I send you the regulations of the War office for your Government. No complaints should go on to the Genl. Government, of the neglect or withholding from them their lawful dues by the qr. masters Department. Let me observe to you, that whenever you receive a return for forage, you should always calculate the quantity demanded, *yourself*, and not trust to the qr. master; for you will be held responsible for all deficiencies. Wood should be drawn on the first day of every month. The return for wood, for the *men*, should also be consolidated. The officers may draw on their separate returns, without any other signature than their own. If you have not sufficient quarters for the officers in the Baracks, you must provide them in town or country, agreeable to the regulation. Be careful in obtaining vouchers for every thing you deliver; and for all articles paid by purchase take triplicate receipts. I wish you a great deal of patience and activity in your various duties; and am with esteem,” etc.

At the same time that the troops of your command should be held in readiness to traverse the country for prompt operations on the side of Mobile and Pensacola, it is important your boats should be carefully preserved for the descent of the river, should the enemy make his attack directly against this city; and, for this purpose, it is adviseable they should be secured on the side of the river opposite to Natchez, in charge of a vigilant officer and a suitable detachment.

With consideration and respect,

I have the honor to be, . . . .